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BECAUSE I WAS PUNISHED SEVERELY...FOR A CRIME I COMMITTED.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

SOMEONE SOLD EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US OUT.

FOR HIS OWN BENEFIT.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "SOLD"...?

THEN WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?

YOU'VE BEEN TO MACHIA'S PALACE, SO YOU SHOULD KNOW.

HOW THEY TREAT HUMANS IN THAT PLACE...

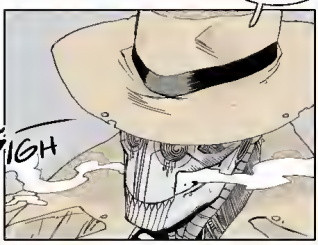
HOW DID THEY DO THAT? WHAT REASON DID THEY HAVE?!

THAT'S ENOUGH. WE DIDN'T COME HERE TO LISTEN TO THAT STORY.

BUT IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE!!

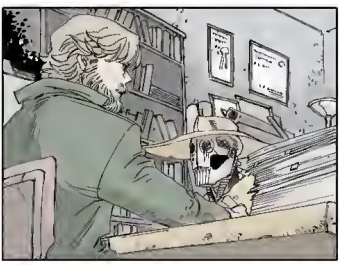
THOSE PEOPLE COULD'VE BEEN THE LAST PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE PALACE!

...

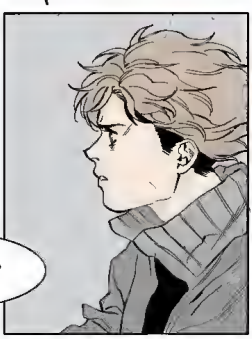


YURA... WAS IT?

SORRY, BUT NO-ONE KNOWS IF THOSE WERE THE LAST HUMANS.



THEN COULD THERE BE MORE HUMANS OUTSIDE THE PALACE? HUMANS LIKE ME??



NO-ONE KNOWS THAT EITHER.

THEY'RE TOO BUSY HIDING THEMSELVES, UNLIKE YOU... OR EVEN ME.

ONCE THEY KNOW ABOUT EACH OTHER, THEY'LL COME TO RELY ON ONE ANOTHER... AND WILL EVENTUALLY...

LOSE THE QUIET LIVES THEY HAD BEFORE.

HUMANS ARE SOCIAL ANIMALS.

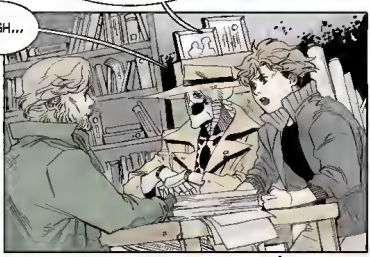
WHILE THEY MAY BECOME UNIMAGINABLY STRONGER WHEN THEY'RE TOGETHER...

IF THE WORLD IS SUCH A PLACE WHERE THAT STRENGTH CAN BE SNUFFED OUT IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE...

IT'S BETTER FOR THEM TO LIVE QUIETLY BY THEMSELVES INSTEAD.

BUT YOU'RE STILL BREATHING BECAUSE YOU RAN AWAY...

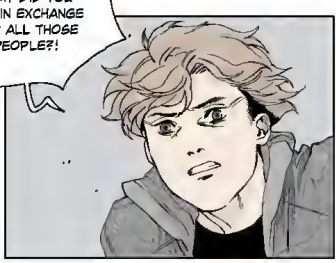
SIGH...



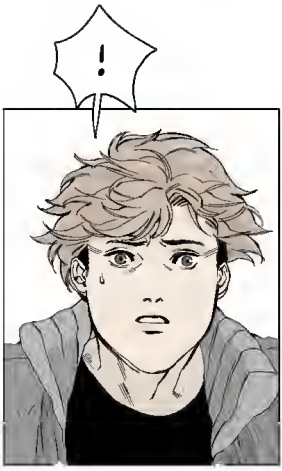
AREN'T YOU ASHAMED? DON'T YOU FEEL GUILTY AT ALL?!

HOW IS SOMEONE LIKE YOU SUPPOSED TO PROTECT ME?!

WHAT DID YOU GET IN EXCHANGE FOR ALL THOSE PEOPLE?!



ETERNAL LIFE.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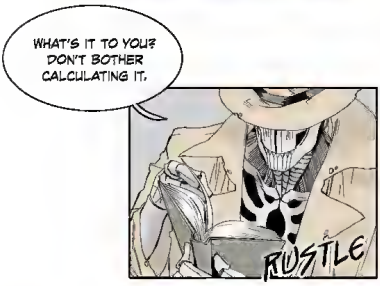
WHAT'RE YOU SURPRISED ABOUT? IF YOU HAVE AN ARTIFICIAL BODY, YOU CAN LIVE FOR A LONG TIME, RIGHT?
AS LONG AS YOU DON'T TAKE AN INJURY THAT CAN'T BE FIXED...
I MEAN, HOW OLD DO YOU THINK AARON IS?

...

FWIP


WHAT'S IT TO YOU? DON'T BOTHER CALCULATING IT.
RUSTLE

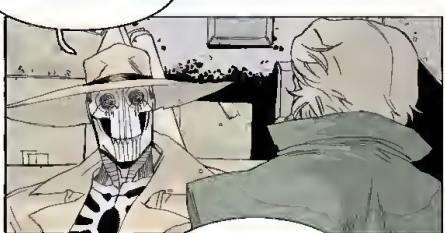
BUT EVEN SO, NO-ONE CAN LIVE FOR A THOUSAND YEARS...
AND ONCE YOU'VE SEEN WHAT I'VE SEEN...
YOU START TO THINK IT MIGHT BE BETTER TO DIE EARLY.
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT? YOU KEEP CONTRADICTING YOURSELF...
HOW CAN YOU LAUGH WHEN YOU THINK OF THE PEOPLE YOU BETRAYED?

PFFT!
AARON, I'D BELIEVE YOU EVEN IF YOU SAID HE WAS YOUR SON.
YOU'RE BOTH SO SERIOUS!
ABSOLUTELY NO SENSE OF HUMOR!
HMPH.
BUT ISN'T IT STRANGE?
WHAT IS?
SNIFF
SNIFF
SNIFF

YOU THINK THE PEOPLE WHO WENT TO THE PALACE WOULD'VE DIED, BUT YOU SURVIVED.

INSIDE, AND OUTSIDE THE PALACE.

AH, THAT REMINDS ME.

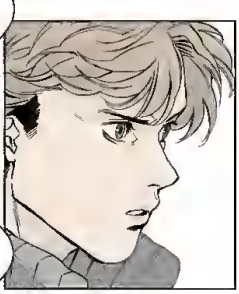


THERE'S A SURVEILLANCE BOT TAILING US.

HM... INTERESTING.

...SO HE'S WATCHING YOU.

COME TO THINK OF IT, ONLY SIRA AND I SURVIVED.



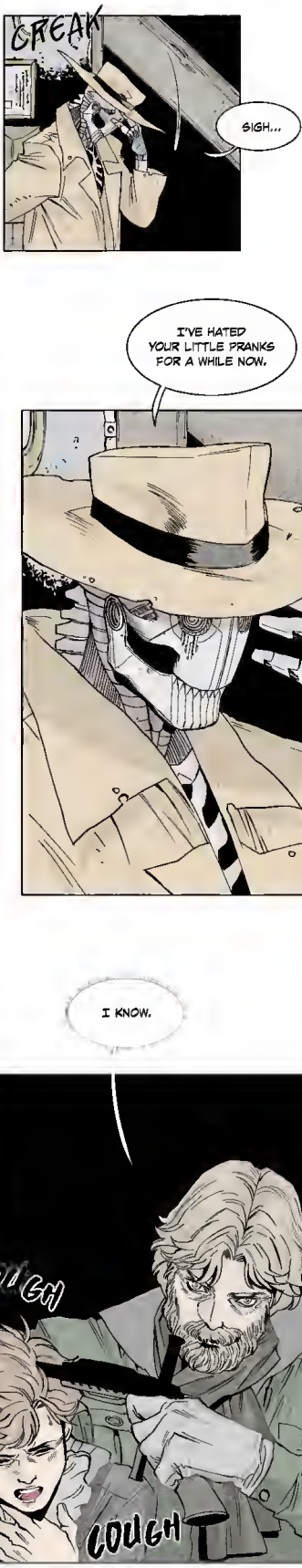
AFTER ALL THOSE EXPERIMENTS, ONLY WE...

IT WAS DIFFERENT WITH THE OTHERS.

AND YOU DON'T KNOW WHY?
HOW WOULD ANYONE KNOW WHAT THAT BASTARD'S THINKING?!
YOU MEAN MACHIA?
BUBBLE BUBBLE
YEAH!!
HOO~O
LET'S STOP GOSSIPING FOR NOW,
I DID EXAGGERATE AND CALL IT PROTECTIVE CUSTODY; BUT...
AH, RIGHT. BACK ON TOPIC. THERE'S NO NEED TO KEEP SITTING AROUND LIKE THIS.
I'VE ALREADY SEEN ENOUGH OF YOUR FACE TO LAST ME 5 YEARS, SO LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH.
WHY? I STILL HAVE MORE TO SAY.
YOU KNOW SOMETHING ELSE, DON'T YOU?

KID. I DON'T THINK YOU KNOW EXACTLY HOW OLD I AM...
YOU'RE TOO BRATTY...
FWIP
AND CUTE~!
?!!
PINCH
WHAT THE HELL!
HAHA
ATCHHHH
CREEPY BASTARD.
HUH?? WHAT??
WHAT DID YOU SAY? MY HEARING AID MUST BE-
NEVERMIND.
SO TELL ME. HOW DO YOU PLAN ON PROTECTING HIM?
AH RIGHT, RIGHT.

LIKE I SAID,
IT MIGHT BE CALLED PROTECTIVE CUSTODY, BUT ACTUALLY...
HE'S JUST GOING TO STICK WITH ME.
LET'S GO, YURA.
JUMP
WHAT? WAIT, I STILL HAVE A FEW-
WOOSH
IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, YOU CAN GO BACK YOURSELF. I'LL KEEP THIS ONE COMPANY.
GRAB
ACK!



TO BE CONTINUED...